Bangladeshi children in Mankhard Observation home

5498. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have seen the news-item which appeared in Times of India (Mumbai edition) on April 6, 1995 under the caption '12 Bangladeshi children languishing in Mankhard observation home';

(b) whether it is a fact that the State Government has taken up the issue with Central Government as well as the Bangladeshi Authorities, as the Bangladeshi children were being taken for camel racing; and

(c) what steps Government propose to take in restoring these children to their parents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. M. SAYEED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) Government of Maharashtra have reported that 3 Bangladeshi nationals alongwith 4 minor children were arrested on 22-11-90 because they were going to Dubai on false visas. Cases were registered against 3 Bangladeshi nationals and they have been deported to Bangladesh on 27-12-92 ater completion of their sentence. The 4 minor children are however still in Mankhard Observation Home. Again on 25 March 1992 Maharashtra Police arrested 9 Bangladeshis and 2 Indians for kidnapping 25 minor Bangladeshi children who were being taken to Dubai for the purpose of camel race. All the minor children were kept in safe custody. Seventeen of these children have since been handed over to the Bangladesh authorities. The remaining 8 minor Bangladeshi children have not been sent back so far because they have been identified as the children of the 9 Bangladeshis who are still in judicial custody. The Government of Maharashtra is constantly in touch with the concerned authorities for making arrangements for repatriation of the minor Bangladeshi children.

Instructions have been issued by the Government to the Immigration Authorities directing them to be more vigilant while scrutinising the travel documents of the persons (including Indians) accompanying minor children and/or minor brides before clearing them at the immigration counters.

Sarkaria Commission's recommendations

5499. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to implement the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission for the selection of Governors and lay down guidelines for their functioning; and

(b) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. M. SAYEED): (a) and (b) The Sub-Committee of the Inter-State Council has been entrusted with the examination of the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission. The Government would take a view on the various recommendations of the Commission after these have been considered by the Inter-State Council.

Afgani nationals in India

5500. SHRI VIRENDRA KATARIA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the number of Afghanistani nationals staying India at present and whether any financial assistance is being given to them and if so, the details thereof;

(b) how long these persons would stay in India; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that a large number of Afghani nationals are indulging in smuggling activities and if so, how many arrests have been made so far during the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): (a) As per available information, at present there are approximately 24,662 registered Afghan nationals living in India (Children below the age of 16 years are not required to register under the provisions of the Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939). Government of India is not extending any financial assistance to them.

(b) As per policy, Afghan nationals who have been staying in India are being granted extention of stay on six monthly basis.

(c) Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Refugees from neighbouring countries

5501. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) how many refugees from Srilanka, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Myanmar are there in the country;

(b) whether these refugees would be asked to go back to their countries or would be rehabilitated in the country with the help of UNCR;

(c) what is the difference between an illegal emigrant and a refugee;

(d) whether Government are treating all Muslim who have come from the above countries as illegal emigrants or some of them are treated as refugees, stating the number of such Muslim refugees; and

people who are harassed as illegal emi-people who are harssaed as illegal smigrants?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI P. M. SAYEED): (a) The estimated number of refugees from various countries residing in India at present nationality-wise are as under:—

S.No.	Name of the country	No. of refugees
1.	Sri Lanka .	87,270
2.	Bangladesh (Chakma/Hajong)	85,982
3.	Myanmar . .	52

About 22,000 Afghans presently living in this country under the mandate of the UNHCR have not been recognised as refugees by the Government of India. There are no refugees in the country who have arrived from Pakistan.

(b) The refugees from Sri Lanka and the Chakma refugees from Bangladesh accommodated in Tripura are being repatriated on a voluntary basis in consultation with the concerned Governments. There is no proposal for the repatriation of the Chakma/Hajong refugees settled in Arunachal Pradesh and the Myanmar refugees. There is no proposal for rehabilitating the refugees with the help of UNHCR.

(c) An illegal immigrant is a person who has entered a country without valid documentation, whereas a refugee is one who is so recognised by the relevant laws.

(d) All persons irrespective of their religion who have entered the country without valid documentation are being treated as illegal immigrants. Such of the persons, irrespective of their religion, who are recognised as refugees are being terated as refugees. No separate figures are being maintained in respect of refugees on the basis of their religion.

(e) The laws of the land provide enough safgeuards to people against any such harassment in case it occurs.